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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

Summary: President Barack Obama's determination while addressing the UNGO to "defeat Al-Qaeda" and to "stand by Pakistan" received extensive coverage in all major newspapers on Thursday. Almost all the Urdu and English language dailies highlighted the demand of President Zardari that "the U.S. [should] fast track reimbursement of outstanding Coalition Support Fund of \$1.6 billion to Pakistan." Stories about General Stanley McChrystal's criticism of "increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan," house arrest of Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed and the reports that "U.S. mulling more drone attacks in Pakistan" also garnered media attention today. The English daily, "Dawn," in a front page story reported that "nuclear scientist Dr. A. Q. Khan declined to comment on the veracity of a letter he had allegedly written to his wife about five years ago.... Stirring up a fresh controversy about his role in nuclear proliferation." Newspapers also highlighted reports that "former President Pervez Musharraf will privately discuss Afghan war with U.S. lawmakers."

Editorializing U.S. General Stanley McChrystal's criticism of the increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan, the prestigious English language daily, "Dawn," observed that "it is clear that peace in Afghanistan cannot prevail unless the interests of the Pakistani state are taken into account.... Identifying the problem does not mean the U.S. is necessarily in a position to do something about it." In its editorial, the center-right national English daily "The Nation" asserted that "General McChrystal's charge against elements of ISI aiding the Taliban has an air of dj`vu. This had at one time been a constant refrain of American officials." Commenting on the approval of \$2.3 billion as U.S. aid for Pakistan, the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" noted that "this aid offer, however, will bring with it issues. One of these is the question of how the aid will be disbursed." End Summary.

News Stories

"Obama Pledges To Defeat Al Qaeda" "Dawn" (09/24)

"U.S. President Barack Obama pledged on Wednesday to defeat Al Qaeda and said the United States would permit no safe havens for terrorists to launch attacks from Afghanistan or any other country. 'The violent extremists who promote conflict by distorting faith have discredited and isolated themselves,' the U.S. President told the 192-member UN General Assembly."

"Zardari Urges U.S. For Early Reimbursement Of Coalition Support Fund - Holbrooke, Ban Meet President" "The News" (09/24)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday urged the U.S. to reimburse the outstanding Coalition Support Fund of \$1.6 billion on a fast track basis. The President said this while talking to Obama's Special Envoy for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke, who called on him in New York on Tuesday afternoon. "

"Pakistan Hopes For Major Help To End Economic Crisis" "Dawn" (09/24)

"The stage is set to launch a major international action on Thursday to help Pakistan overcome the current energy and economic crises which the Americans fear may destabilize the nuclear-armed country if not controlled. The action, to be launched at the first summit of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session, is unique."

"Who Are Pakistan's 'Friends' And What Do They Want" "Dawn" (09/24)

"President Asif Ali Zardari is due to meet his country's main backers, including President Barack Obama, at a 'Friends of Pakistan' meeting in New York on Thursday (today).... In particular, the group (Friends of Pakistan) wants to help Pakistan foster economic development and fight terrorism.... The United States and other allies with troops in Afghanistan want to see Pakistan tackle Taliban hideouts on the Pakistani side of the Afghan border. But some analysts say Pakistan might be reluctant to take on the only Afghan factions it can use to counter what it says is the ever-growing influence of India in Afghanistan."

"WB-Supplied Fund For NWFP, FATA And Balochistan" "Dawn" (09/24)
"A multi-donor World Bank-operated Trust Fund for NWFP, Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Balochistan is expected to be set up at the Friends of Democratic Pakistan summit in New York on Thursday to address the problem of underdevelopment in these areas."

"U.S. General Criticizes Indian Influence In Afghanistan" "Dawn" (09/24)

"India's increasing influence in Afghanistan is jeopardizing U.S. efforts to defeat the Taliban and Al Qaeda extremists, warns Gen. Stanley McChrystal, the top U.S. and NATO commander in the war-ravaged country. The suggestion to scale back India's growing influence in Afghanistan is included in an assessment submitted to U.S. President Barack Obama on Wednesday."

"Hafiz Saeed put Under 'House Arrest': Jamaat-ud-Daawa" "The Nation" (09/24)

"The Punjab government on Monday clamped restrictions on movement of Hafiz Saeed, head of banned religious outfit Jamaat-ud-Daawa, disallowing him to lead Eid prayers outside Gaddafi Stadium, an open place where he used to perform this religious obligation in the past."

"U.S. Unrepentant On Drones" "The Nation" (09/24)

"Pakistan must brace itself for more American drone attacks if President Barack Obama decides to shift his strategy against Al-Qaeda away from more troops in Afghanistan to more strikes by unmanned aircraft against terrorist targets. As the war worsens in Afghanistan, a U.S. media report said Obama could steer away from the comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy he laid out this spring and towards a narrower focus on counterterrorism operations."

"Dr. Khan Quiet On Times Proliferation Report" "Dawn" (09/24)

"Nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan declined on Wednesday to comment on the veracity of a letter he had allegedly written to his wife about five years ago and whose contents published by a British newspaper have stirred up a fresh controversy about his role in nuclear proliferation. Revelations made in the letter prompted an immediate reaction from the United States which said that Dr. A.Q. Khan was still a 'risk for proliferation.'"

"Musharraf to Discuss Afghan War With U.S. Lawmakers" "Daily Times" (09/24)

"Former military ruler General (R) Pervez Musharraf will meet privately with U.S. lawmakers on September 29 to discuss the changing US strategy for fighting the war in Afghanistan, according to an email obtained by AFP on Wednesday."

"U.S. Approves \$2.376 Billion Aid For Pakistan" "The News" (09/24)

"American Congress has approved aid amounting to \$2.376 billion for Pakistan. 'Geo News' reported that this aid amount was meant for the fiscal year 2008-09, while the U.S. government has also presented an aid bill for Pakistan for the fiscal year 2009-10 amounting to \$2.282 billion in the American Congress. This assistance includes both military and non-military aid."

"Transparency Indicts Pakistan At Critical Time" "The News" (09/24)

"In an obvious rebuke to President Asif Zardari's efforts to seek massive aid from the world community, the global anti-corruption watchdog, the Transparency International, issued a stinging indictment on the eve of a high-profile New York meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan, saying: 'How can one expect from any donor to come forward to assist Pakistan from its current financial crisis, when there exist no law against corruption.' Releasing the annual report, the Transparency International Chief in Pakistan Adeel Gilani said anti-corruption efforts in the country had taken a 180 degree turn since Gen Pervez Musharraf issued the National Reconciliation Ordinance on October 5, 2007."

"Corruption Was Bad Enough, Now Human Trafficking As Well; Pakistan Put On Watch List By State Department" "The News" (09/24)

"It was a shameful Wednesday for Pakistan, first for being dubbed as one of the most corrupt nations by the Transparency International and then on the same day to be put on the State Department watch list for failing to curb human smuggling. The government's failure to provide the required information to the State Department on the former's efforts to curb human trafficking has led to the Islamabad's inclusion in the State Department's Tier 2 Watch List."

"U.S. Has Failed In Public Diplomacy, Says Qureshi" "The News" (09/24)

"Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi candidly gave a f-grade to American policy-makers in perception management during an interview with American News Channel, CBS. Questioned about reasons behind rise in anti-American sentiment in the Pakistani public, the Foreign Minister felt the U.S. had failed in public diplomacy."

"ANP Asks Parties To Resist Enhanced U.S. Presence" "Dawn" (09/24)

"The Awami National Party (ANP) has warned the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) that it may, along with other parties, take to the street if the federal government succumbs to 'the U.S. pressure' of allowing private American armies to operate in the country."

"Malik Denies Presence Of Blackwater In Pakistan" "Daily Times" (09/24)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Wednesday categorically denied the existence or operations of US private security firm Blackwater in the country. 'Blackwater does not engage in any activity in Pakistan. Indeed no official or foreign security company has been provided any facility in the country,' he said during an interview with a private TV channel."

"U.S. Departure From Region Key To Peace: JI" "The News" (09/24)

"Secretary General of the Jamaat-e-Islami Liaquat Baloch has said that withdrawal of the U.S.-led coalition forces from Afghanistan was indispensable for peace in the region."

"Army Close To Winning Anti-Terror War: COAS" "Dawn" (09/24)

"The army is close to winning the war against terrorism and it will guarantee national security without letting anyone cast an evil eye on Pakistan, says Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani. Addressing army Jawans during a visit to South Waziristan and Tank on Wednesday, Gen. Kayani praised the soldiers' devotion

and dedication and said that the strategy adopted by the army and people's support had led to the dismantling of the terror network."

"Mass Exodus From South Waziristan Continues" "The News" (09/24)

"Scores of families continued shifting to safer places due to the ongoing clashes between the militants and security forces in Mahsud-inhabited areas of South Waziristan Agency, Tribal sources said."

"Eight Bodies Found" "Dawn" (09/24)

"Security forces found two decapitated bodies and six bullet-riddled bodies in Hangu, Orakzai Agency and Darra Adamkhel on Wednesday. The eight people are believed to have been killed by militants."

"At Least 21 Militants Surrender In Swat" "Dawn" (09/24)

"Security forces have arrested at least 24 terrorists during the last 24 hours. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), search and clearance operations are continuing in Swat and Malakand."

"Suicide Bombing Mastermind Held" "Dawn" (09/24)

"Security forces killed seven terrorists and claimed to have captured a militant accused of masterminding suicide bombings in Swat. According to the army media cell, Mohammad Naseem alias Abu Faraj was arrested in Bara Bandai area on Tuesday."

"Taliban Commander Among 4 Held In Nowshera" "The News" (09/24)

"The security agencies have arrested an important Taliban Commander, Siddique alias Abu Zar, a mentor of suicide bombers and a close aide to Swat Taliban Chief, Maulana Fazlullah, along with his three companions during an operation, official sources told 'The News.'"

"Two Peace Body Members Killed In Swat" "The News" (09/24)

"Two members of the village peace committee were killed and two other persons sustained injuries when unknown militants opened fire at them in Manglawar area of Swat Valley on Wednesday, sources in the area said."

Editorials/Op-eds

"McChrystal And India," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/24)

"Indian political and economic influence is increasing in Afghanistan, including significant development efforts and financial investment. In addition, the current Afghan government is perceived by Islamabad to be pro-Indian. These words of Gen. Stanley McChrystal, which are a part of his assessment of the war in Afghanistan, are perhaps as significant as any other in the report for two reasons. One, it is clear that peace in Afghanistan cannot prevail unless the interests of the Pakistani state are taken into account. And from that perspective, enhanced Indian interests in Afghanistan are inimical to peace in the region.... But welcome as it may be that the U.S. appears to finally be coming around to understanding Pakistan's security outlook, there are problems. Identifying the problem doesn't mean the U.S. is necessarily in a position to do something about it."

"The Air Of Dj` Vu," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (09/24)

"General McChrystal's charge against elements of Pakistan's ISI aiding the Taliban has an air of dj` vu. This had at one time been a constant refrain of American officials as, on the one hand, they found that the phenomenon of resistance refused to peter out despite the superior U.S. firepower and, on the other, Pakistan was reluctant to launch military operation in the sensitive region along the border with Afghanistan for valid internal reasons.... However,

the General's warning against the growing Indian influence in Afghanistan chimes in with Pakistan's position and correctly points to the destabilization impact it would have on the region."

"U.S. General Stanley's Realism," an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/24)

"American General Stanley McChrystal has warned that increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan can increase tension in the region which could become detrimental to American interests.... The Obama administration should reconsider its Af-Pak policy in the light of General Stanley's report, especially American Envoy Holbrooke should be asked to read the report.... President Zardari, who is visiting America these days, should also inform the Obama administration about nefarious Indian designs against Pakistan's integrity."

"Aid From U.S.," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/24)

"The U.S. Congress has approved aid of \$2.3 billion for Pakistan.... This is all the more so as approval has also been sought for an aid package for the coming fiscal year. The aid offer, however, will bring with it issues. One of these is the question of how the aid will be disbursed.... The new U.S. administration has also made it clear it wishes to see investment in education and the social sector. Pakistan has also been asked to draw up clear projects for this. For the people of Pakistan, the change in emphasis from military aid alone to a more mixed package is probably good news.... In the longer-term, Pakistan needs to carefully assess its relationship with the U.S. and find a way to set it out on a more equal footing, so that Washington acts as a friend rather than as a master."

"Meeting Of The Friends Of Democratic Pakistan: Don't Accept Any Aid At The Cost Of National Interests," an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/24)

"Following President Asif Ali Zardari's meetings with former President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Special Representative Holbrooke, this propaganda of American and British press came to the fore that President Zardari is willing to minimize Pakistan's nuclear capability. President Zardari might give assurance in this respect in the meeting of the so-called Friends of Pakistan. In this backdrop, the nation is justifiably concerned about Zardari's long foreign trip."

"Challenges Facing NATO In Afghanistan" an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (09/24)

"The law and order situation in Pakistan has improved greatly after the military operation against the Taliban. The biggest evidence being eid, which passed by peacefully without any major terrorist act. If the NATO countries want to counter challenges facing them in Afghanistan, they too need to launch a comprehensive operation to break the terror network in Afghanistan. The other way [to improve the situation] would be to end the Afghan war, and Pakistan has also offered to help in this regard. It is now up to the U.S. and NATO to decide which option they want to try."

"Rise In U.S. Problems In Afghanistan," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (09/24)

"The U.S. cannot absolve itself of the Afghan issue by sending in more troops, as it would increase the local resistance. On the other hand, allied countries are considering pulling their troops out. If this trend strengthens, the U.S. will be left alone to shoulder the entire burden - which can prove even more devastating for its already declining economy."

"Americans See A Change In The Air In Pakistan," a news commentary by Dr. Shahid Masood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/24)

"Americans see a change fast, but smoothly, coming in Pakistan in the wake of loss of credibility of the man at the helm, following some domestic legal developments. After meeting top political and

defence decision-makers in Washington, where I was invited by the National Defence University (NDU) for a two-day seminar on the anniversary of 9/11, I was told in unambiguous terms that a change in Pakistan was inevitable for U.S. policy interests, although Washington does not intend to disrupt the system. Several important Pakistani political players have also been conveyed the same message by the U.S. political and defence establishment. The main problem being faced by the U.S. administration, which it may never admit publicly, is that the present set-up with Mr. Asif Ali Zardari as the de facto ruler, has no credibility at home and no ability to deliver on the promises he makes, either on the military side or on the war on terror or on governance issues."

"Not Vietnam, Not Yet," an op-ed by Tariq Fatemi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/24)

"President Barack Obama recently asserted that Afghanistan was not Vietnam, which shows his apprehension that Afghanistan is reviving the nightmarish memories of Vietnam that are seared in the American psyche. Hence the need to revisit the issue. Obama is increasingly giving the impression of a beleaguered leader, confronted by powerful lobbies determined to sabotage his well-intentioned proposals, whether they include domestic health reforms or his Middle East initiative. But it is Afghanistan that could cripple his administration and tar him for all times. The situation is not getting better, with a Taliban resurgence that has surprised U.S. commanders.... A U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan would leave it with little justification for its growing presence in Central Asia where it has been establishing military bases and other facilities.... Given the limited options before Obama, it is not unlikely that there will be renewed efforts to make the Afghan war more 'efficient,' 'cost-effective' and 'sustainable,' in a way that does not hurt the U.S. leader at home."

"The North-South Nexus," an op-ed by Kamila Hyat in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (09/24)

"The operation against the Taliban militants continues in the north.... But how much does the victory in Swat actually mean? In some ways at least it is not insignificant. A clear signal of unwillingness to do business with the militants has finally been delivered. The initially skeptical people of Swat now seem more convinced that this time round the operation is indeed intended to go beyond the cosmetic and achieve the defeat of the Taliban who had controlled the area for months. But despite this, there is some question as to how far the overall picture has changed. The series of devastating suicide attacks we have seen since August - at the Torkham border post, in Mingora and in Kohat - is evidence the Taliban remain operational."

"Hafiz Saeed Under House Arrest Again," an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (09/24)

"Police is duty bound to provide security to personalities like Hafiz Saeed (Lashkar-i-Taiba chief) and not to restrain them in their houses. Eid is a religious obligation and stopping him from observing Eid in order to appease India and America was inappropriate. Now that it has happened, the unwritten restriction on Hafiz Saeed's movement should end."

"Hafiz Saeed Under House Arrest Again" an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (09/24)

"Prime Minister Gilani said in Multan that action against Hafiz Saeed will be taken on the basis of evidence. India had been asking for evidence against Hafiz Saeed from Pakistan, which means that India does not have any evidence against the Hafiz.... India wants to label Pakistan as a terrorist state, whereas it is involved in terrorism against Pakistan. The government should reconsider its decision to detain Hafiz Saeed."

"Back Channel Diplomacy With India: Include Important Issues In The Agenda," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (09/24)

"The desire to hold talks with India is encouraging but the

government must bear in mind that talks will be fruitless until important issues [like Kashmir and Baglihar Dam] are included in the agenda. It is important that these issues be added to the agenda."

"No Forward Movement," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (09/24)

"President Obama is seeking to bring the two sides to the negotiating table in the hope that the issue of the settlement freeze would be discussed. The American leader plans to keep up the pressure on both sides through Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Middle East special envoy George Mitchell. But it is difficult to be optimistic under the circumstances, especially if it is kept in mind that freezing settlement activities would be relatively easier to accomplish than the other daunting items on the agenda such as the status of Jerusalem, the fate of Palestinian refugees and the borders of a future Palestinian state."

"Practical Measures Needed To Resolve The Palestinian Issue," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (09/24)

"President Obama realizes that global powers' ineffective role on Palestine has created the impression that the U.S. is following anti-Muslim policies. The continuation of Israeli settlements, restrictions on Palestinians' movement, and stopping international assistance have all added to the woes of Palestinians, instead of reining in Israel. President Obama needs to pay as much attention to the implementation of the two-state solution as he has stressed on the resumption of talks on the matter."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson